

SENILIA

Poems in Prose

BEING

MEDITATIONS, SKETCHES &c

BY

IVAN TURGÉNIEFF

English Version, with Introduction and Biographical Sketch of the Author

BY

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BRISTOL

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Hans sidste Værker, "Klara Militsch" . . .
og den beundringsværdige Samling Prosadigte
"Senilia" indeholde ligesom en endnu dybere
Melankoli end hans Ungdomsarbejder, kun højst
poetisk gennemlynet af et lyrisk fantastisk
Element. Han staar her for sidste Gang Ansigt
til Ansigt med Livets Hemmelighed og tyder
den med uendeligt Vemod i Symboler og
Sværmerier.

G. BRANDES.

Introduction.

THIS little work consists of a series of short pieces of a very miscellaneous character — meditations, sketches, visions, allegories, fantasies — written by Turgénieff during the last years of his life. Between 1878 and 1882 he composed a large number of such pieces, and in the latter year made a selection of fifty to be given to the public. These he sent to M. Stassyulevitch, editor of the *European Messenger* ("Vyestnik Evropy"), a high-class Russian journal, and they appeared in the number for December, 1882. They form the basis of the present work.

The title given by Turgénieff to his contribution to the *Messenger* was *Senilia**;

* The author gave no formal title to the work; but the envelope containing the MS. bore the superscription—"Senilia."

but the editor, rightly judging that these compositions bear no trace of the feebleness of old age, published them under a title used by the author as a *description* of them in a letter accompanying the MS.—namely, “Poems in Prose.” Under this title also they were published in German by Wilhelm Lange, the accomplished interpreter of Russian Literature for Germany, and thence for the world at large. I have, however, ventured to restore the title so casually given to them by the author, because Turgénieff, as a literary worker, was far too careful and too conscientious to give an inappropriate title to his work. Herr Lange thinks he selected the title *Senilia* out of modesty,—and this may well be, for Turgénieff invariably displays the modesty of the true artist, and was, indeed, rather disposed to undervalue his contributions to the literature of

his country.* But it must be evident to every reader of these studies that the author intended them to be regarded as the work of an old man, of a man whose life is behind him, of a man, in short, who has "*gelebt und geliebet.*" Provided, then, that no derogatory sense be attached to the term *Senilia*—and the Latin word does not necessarily involve such a sense—it is, I submit, by all means to be retained. On the other hand, M. Stassyulevitch's title is very appropriate; I have therefore retained it also, and have even been bold enough to add a sub-title of my own, with the view of indicating more precisely the scope and nature of the work.

Called by whatsoever name, the book contains Turgénieff's last word in Literature; and readers of his novels will easily recognise in these short studies the leading literary qualities of the author of *Dimitri*

*See Appendix to *Fathers and Sons*, 2nd (German) Edition.

Rúdin, *Virgin Soil*, *Fathers and Sons*, and of those wonderful pictures of Russian life (and, at the same time, of human nature) contained in the *Memoirs of a Sportsman*. There is the same clearness of conception even where the subject is somewhat mystical, the same photographic accuracy of presentation, the same self-restraint, the same sympathy with Nature and power of depicting minutely her various phases, the same irony, the same intensely *Russian* feeling, the same somewhat cynical humour, sombreness of tone, *tristesse* of sentiment, and hardly veiled pessimism. It would not be surprising if many readers of Turgéniéff's other works came to the conclusion that, as a literary artist, our author never did anything finer or more characteristic than the little sketch entitled "Hang Him!" in the present volume.—By a curious stroke of fate, the irresponsible chatter of a lying housewife has, for a

moment, the power to expose an innocent soldier to the chance of being condemned to an ignominious death—the death of a thief; and she uses that power mercilessly. The sudden apparition of the commander, whose lightest word is law, deprives the unfortunate man of all power of speech in self-defence. The fatal sentence is pronounced by an officer whose mind—occupied, doubtless, with serious problems relating to the campaign—is only half-alive to what is going on around; but the sentence, once passed, is as irreversible as the decree of Destiny itself. When the unfortunate soldier's doom is sealed, the wretched creature who by her chatter has secured his destruction, sets about saving him *by more chatter*; and the innocent young fellow, with words of Christian forgiveness on his lips, is marched off to his death. The time occupied by the incident from first to last is, perhaps, twenty

minutes.—Now, all this is TurgéniEFF, and TurgéniEFF at his best. Nor must the reader fail to notice the most suggestive touch in this most suggestive sketch,—I mean the comment of the narrator. He was an old soldier of the eighteenth-century type—compact of pipeclay and red tape,—and he had so long heard, and had himself employed, the platitudes of officialism, that at last he actually came to think—and probably went to his grave thinking—that Order and Discipline were vindicated by the death of a man whose innocence was *demonstrated* before his execution!

In the letter accompanying the MS. the author makes a very natural request: he entreats the reader not to run through the book at a single sitting. Weariness, he fears, would be the inevitable result,—also, I will add, the missing of all that is characteristic

and valuable in the work. He would have the reader take up one piece to-day, another piece to-morrow, so that of what he reads some part "may sink into his soul." This is only fair. Many of the pieces in the volume are manifestly—as respects the *writing* of them—*impromptus*, but they are, without exception, the products of meditation; and only by meditation can the reader hope to enjoy or (in some cases) even to understand them.

It only remains to state that the version here offered to the public is based on the German version of W. Lange,* and the Danish version of I. Heilbuth.† These were the only versions I could obtain that are taken directly from the Russian. As, in such a work, the literary *form* is important, I have translated as closely as possible—in no case,

* *Gedichte in Prosa*; von I. Turgénieff, Aus dem Russischen, von W. Lange.

† *Senilia: Digte i Prosa*, af Iwan Turgeniew, paa Dansk ved I. Heilbuth.

I hope, to the obscuring of the sense, or the introducing of harsh or unusual combinations; and I have retained, as far as possible, the original punctuation.

In a short Biographical Note I have recalled the leading incidents in the life of Turgénieff, and indicated his place in Russian, and in European Literature.

S. J. M.

August, 1890.

Biographical Note.

IVÁN SERGHEIEVITCH TURGÉNIEFF was born in the government of Orel, which lies directly south of Moscow, on the 28th October, 1818. His father was a wealthy landed proprietor, and of course possessed a large number of souls;* so that Turgénieff became acquainted in very early life with that serf class which he has described in his writings with such sympathy and fidelity. After receiving the elements of his education at home, he was sent to school in Moscow. Thence he proceeded to the University of St. Petersburg, where he spent three years. At the age of twenty (1838) he went to Germany and studied at the University of Berlin, devoting himself to Classics, History, and Philosophy—especially the philosophy of Hegel.

* *Souls*—male serfs. Before the Emancipation (1861) the social position of a landowner was indicated by stating the number of *souls* he possessed.

On his return to Russia he lived for some years the life of a Russian country gentleman. He was a keen sportsman, and in his shooting expeditions he visited various parts of his native country. But he was something more than a mere sportsman. During his journeyings he acquired a knowledge of Russia very rare in those days when travelling was so slow and so difficult; he gained that wonderful familiarity with the varying phases of external nature which is as striking a characteristic of his first work as of his last; and he studied, as no man had ever before studied, human nature as exhibited in the Russian people—especially in the Russian people of the lowest or peasant class. He was thus preparing himself—quite unconsciously and therefore all the more effectually—to enter upon the great literary career to which destiny had called him.

That career began in 1843 with the publication of a small volume of poems, written under the influence of the study of Byron—therefore affected, and, so far, worthless. But Turgénieff's artistic instincts were too strong and too healthy to be

very long repressed by any external influence whatever; he soon found his true literary calling, and he came to rely for inspiration on nature, experience, and his own unerring artistic impulses. In 1847 he began to contribute to the *Contemporary* (*Sovremenik*) of Moscow a series of prose sketches of Russian country and peasant life and character, the subjects of which had presented themselves to his mind during his shooting excursions. He was now on the firm artistic ground of *reality*, and he never afterwards left it. His sketches were continued at intervals down to 1851; and in 1852 they were collected and published under the title, *Memoirs of a Sportsman*.

These sketches do not seem to have attracted any special attention while they were running in the pages of the Moscow journal; but when collected and published in book form, they produced an effect almost without parallel in the history of Literature. They had been written, apparently, with no "purpose" other than a purely artistic one; but they were nevertheless a powerful plea on behalf of the serf. The writer's descriptions—

so true, so touching—of the life and the lot of the serfs, men of the same race as their masters, went straight to the hearts of thousands of his countrymen and brought emancipation nearer by many a year. Among those who read the *Memoirs* and were most profoundly affected by them, was the Czarewitch, afterwards the Emperor Alexander II. That amiable prince, on his accession in 1856, at once set about the work of emancipation, and in 1861 thirty million serfs received their freedom.

Meanwhile Turgénieff, who had contributed so much to this glorious result, shared the fate of most of the benefactors of mankind: he was persecuted, afflicted, tormented. Of course the large *tchinovnik* or official class, headed by the Emperor, bore no goodwill to the writer who had done so much towards unsettling men's minds in regard to the sacred institution of serfdom; but, with the best will in the world, they were unable to lay their finger on anything objectionable in the book. However, they soon found—or made—their opportunity. Gogol, Turgénieff's great literary prede-

cessor, died about this time, and Turgénieff wrote a highly laudatory article on him in a Moscow newspaper. The article passed the Moscow press-censorship unchallenged; but the Imperial Government discovered in it certain expressions which were construed ("Heaven only knows how!" exclaims Professor Brandes) as implying disrespect towards the Emperor; and Turgénieff, "by command from the highest quarter," was sent to prison in St. Petersburg. After a month's confinement, from which his health suffered severely, he was released through the influence of the Czarewitch, to whom he seems to have appealed. But the Czar had not done with him yet. He was ordered to "confine himself to his estate" of Spaskoye; and there he spent several years in virtual exile. When released, he quitted Russia, never to return, except as an occasional visitor.

The rest of his life he spent partly in France, partly in Germany; but all-hospitable Paris ultimately became his head-quarters. He was very much at home in the West. He wrote and spoke French and German fluently; he read English

also and spoke it, but not very well. He was on friendly terms with the leading writers of Germany —Paul Heyse, etc.,—and his intimacy with the later novelists of France —Prosper Mérimée, Flaubert, Alphonse Daudet, Emile Zola, etc.—was quite of a brotherly character.

His literary activity, if we date from the publication of the *Memoirs* (in 1852), extends over a period of thirty years. During that time he produced a long list of novels and sketches, written, some in Russian, others in French. Being in independent circumstances, he had no temptation to write for immediate gain; hence all his work is done with an artistic care which leaves nothing to be forgiven.

His greatest novels are, perhaps, *Dimitri Rúdin* (1855), *Fathers and Sons* (1861), and *Virgin Soil* (1877). *Fathers and Sons* rendered the author very unpopular in Russia. It is a picture of the old and the new generation of Russians; and both old and young Russia considered themselves grossly libelled. Young Russia especially was very indignant at seeing itself represented in the character

of Bazárof. Turgénieff took the matter very seriously* and protested again and again that Bazárof was a character possessing many virtues; but he never conciliated or silenced young Russia. It is worth remarking that the term *Nihilist* (or *Nihilist*, as the Russians pronounce the word), used by Bazárof as a description of himself (implying that he was emancipated from all authority), has come to denote the extreme, or physical-force party in Russian politics. Other works which may be referred to even in so slight a sketch as the present, are: *Liza*, *The Old Family Mansion* (*Nichée de Gentilshommes*), and *Smoke* (*Fumée—Dunst*). The last-named work brought upon the author the bitter hostility of the Slavophile party, led by M. Katkóf, editor of the *Moscow Gazette* and one of the most influential men in Russia.

In his latter years Turgénieff wrote those short compositions a selection of which was ultimately published under the title of *Poems in Prose*. The first is dated February, 1878, and the last, June,

* *How* seriously may be seen by referring to the little piece, *The Fool's Judgment Thou Wilt Hear*, in the present volume.

1882. They exhibit very clearly his literary methods, and contain (implicitly) a pretty complete exposition of his philosophy.

Turgénieff died in Paris on the 3rd September, 1883.

The following description of Turgénieff, which I extract from Mr. Henry James's pleasant volume, *Partial Portraits*, presents our author in a very agreeable light. It would seem that Ivan Serghéitch (for so his second name or patronymic is pronounced) was a most charming personality :—
“He was exceedingly tall, and broad and robust in proportion. His head was one of the finest, and though the line of his features was irregular, there was a great deal of beauty in his face. It was eminently of the Russian type—almost everything in it was wide. His expression had a singular sweetness, with a touch of Slav languor, and his eye, the kindest of eyes, was deep and melancholy. His hair, abundant and straight, was as white as silver, and his beard, which he wore trimmed rather short, was of the colour of his hair. In all his tall person, which was very striking wherever

it appeared, there was an air of neglected strength, as if it had been a part of his modesty never to remind himself that he was strong. He used sometimes to blush like a boy of sixteen. He had very few forms and ceremonies, and almost as little manner as was possible to a man of his *prestance*. His noble appearance was itself a manner; but whatever he did he did very simply, and he had not the slightest pretension to not being subject to rectification. I never saw anyone receive it with less irritation. Friendly, candid, unaffectedly benignant, the effect he produced most strongly and most generally was, I think, simply that of goodness. . . . He was the most generous, the most tender, the most delightful of men; his large nature overflowed with love of justice: but he also was of the stuff of which glories are made."

* * *

Turgénieff's place in Russian Literature can be indicated in few words. He is the fourth in order of the great writers of what may be called the Natural School. Up to a period well within the

present century Russian Literature consisted of weak, semi-official imitations of Western writers, when Western writers were not yet wholly emancipated from classical, or psuedo-classical influences. But a great reaction was led by PUSHKIN (1799—1837); he went straight to Nature for inspiration (resembling, in this particular, our Wordsworth), and his works, consequently, form a permanent contribution to the world's Literature. Pushkin was killed in a duel in 1837. His literary successor was LERMONTOFF, who likewise, after producing literary work of the highest value, was killed in a duel (1841). He was followed by GOGOL, author of one of the wittiest comedies of the century (*The Revisor*)—a comedy which caused even the iron Czar Nicholas to dissolve in laughter. Gogol died in 1851, and Turgénieff began his literary career in 1852 by the publication of the *Memoirs of a Sportsman*.

But Turgénieff, passing beyond the bounds of his own country and his own language, has won a European reputation. From the circumstance that he lived in the West and published many of his works in French, and that those of his works which were originally written in Russian were, as

his fame grew, translated into the languages of Western Europe, he soon found himself addressing a far larger audience than any of his predecessors, and also, of course, challenging a comparison with a far larger body of rivals. But he has not suffered by the comparison! Though handicapped by having to address his Western readers through the medium of translations (some of them scandalously bad), he has been everywhere recognised as one of the greatest novelists of a century of which the novel is the characteristic literary product. Thus it came to pass that the appearance of Turgénieff as a writer not only was an added glory to his own country, but actually constituted an epoch in the history of European Literature.*

* An excellent critical account of Turgénieff will be found in the *Indtryk fra Rusland* ("Impressions of Russia") of Dr. Georg Brandes (Copenhagen, 1888). I am indebted to it for several of the facts stated above. This book can now be read in an English translation. (By-the-bye, it is not creditable to our love of sound and brilliant criticism that the great work of the same accomplished author, *Hovedstrømninger i det nittende Aarhundredes Litteratur*, has never found its way into English.)

Some very interesting *personal* details regarding Turgénieff are given in the *Partial Portraits* of Mr. Henry James (1888). A long, but not complete list of his works, done into German by very competent hands, appears in Reclam's Universal-bibliotek (Leipzig). A smaller list is published by Hetzel of Paris.

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1879 = 1882.

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1878.

In the Village.

IT is the last day of July. . . . For thousands of versts * on all sides stretches RUSSIA, the fatherland.

The whole heaven is bathed in uniform blue; only one tiny cloud, half floating, half melting away, is visible. Dead calm, sultriness. . . . The air breathes fragrance, as of new milk.

The larks warble; the pouter-pigeons coo; silently the swallows cleave the air on high; the horses snort and graze; the dogs stand silent, peacefully wagging their tails.

There is an odour of smoke, of hay; also one smells—slightly—tar and leather. . . . The hemp has already shot high up, and

* A verst is about three-quarters of an English mile.—ED.

breathes forth its heavy, but not unpleasant fragrance. . . .

Here stretches a deep but gently-sloping ravine. On both sides of it stand rows of tufted, branching willows. A noisy brook rushes down the ravine; the small pebbles at the bottom seem to tremble, seen through the sparkling ripples. Far in the distance, where the sky and earth meet, appears the blue streak of a great river glittering in the sun.

Along the ravine stand, on the one side, neat granaries and barns with fast-locked doors,—on the other, five or six peasant cottages, built of beams of fir, and covered with smooth boards. Above each roof rises a long pole, supporting a starling-box. Over each door is seen the figure of a little horse with flowing mane, cut out of tin-plate. The bull's-eyed window-panes glance with all the colours of the rainbow. Vases, with

nosegays in them, are painted, in very primitive style, on the window-shutters. Before each house stands invitingly a small bench-seat. On a knoll hard by lies a coiled-up cat, which every now and then pricks up her delicate transparent ears. Behind the high threshold opens the shady, cool interior.

I am lying upon an outspread horse-rug at the farthest verge of the ravine. All around me rise heaps of fresh-mown hay, fragrant to oppressiveness. The careful husbandmen have spread it out in front of their houses, to let it get a little more sun, then quick with it into the barns!—What a glorious thing to take a nap on!

Curly heads of youngsters peep forth from every heap. Tufted fowls search for flies and beetles in the hay; a young puppy, his nose still white, whirls round in it in his glee.

Fair-haired peasant lads in clean smocks,

broad belts, and heavy boots ornamented with stitching, lean forward against an un-yoked wagon, and laugh and rally each other, their white teeth gleaming the while.

Out of the window looks, laughing, the round face of a peasant woman.

Does she laugh at the jests of the young fellows, or at the noisy sport of the children in the piled-up hay ?

Another young woman draws, with sturdy arm, a great dripping bucket from the well. The bucket trembles and oscillates on the hoisting rope: glistening, long-drawn drops fall from it into the depth below.

Before me stands an old housewife in her new, checkered linen gown and new shoes.

Three rows of large, hollow glass beads are wound round her brown, withered neck; a yellow kerchief with red spots is tied round her grey head, and falls low over her lustreless eyes.

But how kindly is the smile of those old eyes,—how that whole wrinkled visage smiles! She seems, the good old soul, to be not far from seventy; yet even now one can clearly see that she was a beauty in her time.

With the extended fingers of her sunburnt right hand she offers me a mug of cold, unskimmed milk—straight from the cellar; on the sides of the vessel hang drops like a string of pearls. On the open palm of her left hand she presents a great slice of fresh rye-bread, still warm:

“Pray eat, welcome guest. God bless it to thee!”

Suddenly a cock begins to crow and clap his wings lustily; a shut-up calf lows gently in answer.

“What a sight of oats!” I hear my driver exclaim.

Oh, the glorious comfort, peace, abun-

dance, of the free Russian village! What holy calm, what bliss!

And involuntarily I think: After all, what is a cross on the dome of St. Sophia in Byzantium to us—or all the other worthless things which we town-folk make such a fuss about!

February, 1878.

A Dialogue.

"The foot of man has never trod the Jungfrau or the Finsteraarhorn!"

THE highest summits of the Alps. . . .
A complete chain of steep, rocky
precipices. . . . In the very heart
of the mountains.

Above the mountains a pale-green, bright, silent sky. Piercing, intense cold; hard, glittering snow; and above the snow rise dark, ice-covered, tempest-beaten, rocky peaks.

On opposite points of the horizon rise two giant-mountains—the Jungfrau and the Finsteraarhorn.

And the Jungfrau says to her neighbour:

"What news hast thou to tell me? Thou canst see more distinctly. . . . What is going on there below?"

Some thousands of years rush past : a single minute. And the Finsteraarhorn thunders in reply :

"Thick clouds cover the earth. . . .
Wait !"

Again thousands of years vanish—a single minute.

"Well—and now ?" asks the Jungfrau.

"Now I see : there below everything is as it was—many-coloured and small. Blue waters, black forests, and grey heaped-up masses of stone. And round these there is a constant swarming of little beetles—thou knowest them—those two-footed creatures—which, for so far, have never once been able to soil thee or me."

"Is it—men ?"

"Yes, men."

Thousands of years elapse : a single minute.

"Well, what now ?" asks the Jungfrau.

"The beetles seem to have become fewer," thunders the Finsteraarhorn; "it has become clearer down there; the waters have gathered themselves together; the forests are thinned."

Again thousands of years pass away: a single minute.

"What seest thou now?" says the Jungfrau.

"Round us, here in our neighbourhood, it appears to have become pure," answers the Finsteraarhorn; "but there in the distance I still observe spots in the valleys, I see as before something moving."

"And now?" asks the Jungfrau, after thousands of long years—a single minute.

"Now all is well," answers the Finsteraarhorn. "Wherever I look, there is nothing but perfect whiteness and purity. . . . Everywhere, everywhere our snow—snow and ice. All is stiff with frost. Now all is peaceful, all is well."

"All well," repeats the Jungfrau. "Now we have chatted enough, old friend. Now we must sleep."

"Sleep."

And the mountain-giants sleep; and the green, clear sky sleeps above the Earth, now silent for ever.*

February, 1878.

* Since the above was written, the ascent of the Jungfrau has been accomplished more than once. The mountain-top was "trodden" during the present year by three young German ladies.—ED.

The Old Woman.

I WAS walking alone across a wide field. Suddenly I heard light, cautious steps behind me. . . . Someone was following me.

I looked round and perceived a little, bent old woman, all clad in grey rags; only her face peered out from under them: a yellow, shrivelled, sharp-nosed, toothless face.

I approached her. . . . She stood still.

“Who art thou? What dost thou want of me? Art thou a beggar? Dost thou desire an alms?”

The old woman answered not. I stooped down towards her, and remarked that her eyes were covered with that half-transparent, whitish membrane which we observe in cer-

tain birds : their eyes are thereby protected against too strong light.

But in the old woman this membrane was immovable ; moreover, it covered the pupils . . . whence I concluded that she was blind.

“Dost thou desire alms?” I asked a second time. “Why followest thou me?”

Still the old woman gave never an answer, but bent, almost imperceptibly, a little lower.

I turned from her, and went farther on my way.

Again I hear behind me those light, measured, stealthy steps.

“This woman again!” thought I; “why, I wonder, does she pursue me thus?” Yet I immediately added in thought: “Perhaps, as she cannot see, she has lost her way, and now follows the sound of my footsteps, in order to reach along with me some inhabited place. Yes,—that’s it.”

But gradually a strange uneasiness took possession of me: I began to feel as if this old woman not merely *followed* me, but in fact *directed* me, as if she drove me now to the right, now to the left, and as if I must obey her whether I would or no.

I walk on. . . . But now I perceive before me, in the way, a black, ever-widening point . . . a sort of cavity. . . .

"*A grave!*" darted through my mind.
"Thither then she drives me!"

I turn short round. Again the hag stands before me . . . but now she can see! She surveys me with large, malicious, ominous eyes—the eyes of a bird of prey . . . I look her steadily in the face, in the eyes. . . . Again that dull membrane, again those lifeless, dull features. . . .

"Ah," thought I, "this hag is my *Fate*—that Fate from which there is no escape."

“No escape? no escape? . . . That is sheer folly! . . . One must try!”

And I turn aside and strike out in another direction.

I walk away fast. . . . But, as before, I hear again the light, rustling tread behind me, near and ever nearer. . . . And before me appears once more—the dark cavity.

I turn to another side. . . . Again behind me the same rustling, and before me the same dark, threatening spot.

And though I turn and double like a hunted hare—it avails nothing, nothing!

“Stay!” thought I. “I will try to deceive her! I stop where I am!”—and immediately I sit down on the ground.

The hag stands a few steps behind me. Hear her I cannot, but I feel she is near.

All at once I see before me in the distance

the same black spot : now it floats, it creeps towards me !

O God ! I look round me. . . . The hag regards me fixedly, and a contemptuous smile distorts her toothless mouth. . . .

“ No escape ! ”

February, 1878.

The Dog.

WE two sit in the room together—my dog and I. Outside roars a violent storm.

The dog sits close to me. He looks straight into my eyes,—and I look straight into his eyes.

It seems as if he would say something to me. He is dumb, has no words, does not understand himself; but I understand him.

I understand that at this moment the same feeling possesses him and me—that not the slightest difference exists between us. We are beings of like kind. In each of us shines and glows the same trembling spark.

Death hastens past with a stroke of his broad, cold, damp wings . . .

And all is over.

Who will then settle the difference between those little sparks which have glowed in us both?

No! it is not a beast and a man that exchange those looks.

They are of like nature—those two pair of eyes which are directed to one another.

And from each pair of these eyes, from those of the "*beast*" as from those of the man, speaks clearly and unmistakably the anxious yearning for closer fellowship.

February, 1878.

My Adversary.

I HAD an adversary; not in business, nor in the service of the State, nor in love affairs; but our views agreed in no one particular, — and every time we met, there ensued between us endless disputing.

We disputed about anything and everything: about Art, Religion, Science, about the life here and hereafter—especially about the life hereafter.

He was an orthodox believer and a fanatic. On one occasion he said to me :

“ You laugh at everything; now, should I die before you, I will certainly appear to you out of the hereafter. We shall then see whether you will laugh ! ”

And he did, in fact, die before me—while

still quite young. But years passed, and I forgot his promise—or threat.

One night I lay in my bed, and could not, or rather would not, fall asleep.

In my chamber it was neither dark nor light; I began to gaze into the grey twilight.

And suddenly it seemed to me as if, between the two windows, my old comrade and adversary stood, and nodded slowly and sadly with his head.

I was not frightened, nor even astonished; but raising myself a little and leaning on my elbow, I looked more keenly at this figure that had risen so unexpectedly.

* The figure continued to nod its head.

“Well,” I began at last; “dost thou triumph or dost thou pity? Art thou come to warn or to blame me? to tell me that thou wast wrong? that both of us were wrong? What has been thy lot? The torments of hell?

The bliss of heaven? Oh, speak, I beg, but one single word!"

Yet not one single sound did my adversary utter — sadly, in silent resignation he, as before, still nodded his head.

I burst out laughing—and he vanished.

February, 1878.

The Beggar.

I WAS walking along the street. A beggar, a feeble old man, stopped me.

② Inflamed, watery eyes, blue lips, rags and tatters, ugly sores—oh, how terribly had want gnawed that miserable creature!

He held out to me his swollen, red, dirty hand. He groaned and begged for help in the usual style.

I began to search all my pockets. But I found neither purse nor watch nor even a pocket-handkerchief—I had nothing with me.

But the beggar still stood, expecting something, and his outstretched hand slightly trembled and quivered.

Surprised and embarrassed as I was, I

seized warmly that dirty, trembling hand.

. . .

“Don’t be angry with me, brother, I have nothing about me !”

The beggar raised his bleared eyes to me, a smile hovered on his wan lips, and he pressed my cold fingers.

“Never mind, brother,” he murmured ; “I thank you all the same for what you have done—that too is alms, brother !”

I felt that I also had received alms of my brother.

February, 1878.

“The Fool's Judgment Thou Wilt
Hear . . .”

PUSHKIN.

“**T**HE fool's judgment thou wilt hear. . .”
Thou hast always spoken truly, thou
—our great national poet; and in this
case too thou art right.

“The judgment of the fool and the
laughter of the crowd!”—who has not be-
come acquainted with the one as with the
other?

These one can and must bear, and he
who feels himself strong enough may even
despise them.

But there are strokes which touch more
nearly, which reach the very heart. A man
has done everything that lay in his power; he
has made honest exertions, he has worked with

devotion . . . Yet honest hearts turn away from him with disgust, honest faces grow red with anger when his name is mentioned. .

“Away with thee! get thee hence!” is the cry uttered by honest young voices: “We need neither thee nor thy labour; thou art a disgrace to our house; thou knowest and understandest us not—thou art our enemy!”

When thus repulsed, what is one to do? — Let him continue to labour, let him make no attempt to vindicate himself—nay, let him not even look forward to a just judgment.

Once, peasants cursed the traveller who, in place of bread, brought them the potato, now the daily food of the poor. They struck the precious gift which he offered them, out of his hand, threw it in the mud and trod it under foot.

Now they live on it,—and do not know even

the name of their benefactor!—Be it so! What is his name to them?—Nameless though he be, he saves them from starvation!

Let us see to it that what we offer is indeed useful food.

Bitter, verily, is undeserved blame from the mouth of those we love. But even this may be borne.

“Strike, but hear me!” said the Athenian general to the Spartan.

“Strike, but—be healthy and well-fed,” must be the burden of *our* song.

February, 1878.

A Contented Man.

THROUGH the streets of the capital hastens, with joyous, bounding steps, a young man. His movements are lively and gay; his eyes sparkle, his lips smile with self-satisfaction, and a blush of pleasure covers his animated countenance. He is all contentment and joy.

What has happened to him? Has he inherited a fortune? Has he received promotion in the service of the State? Does he hasten to keep a tender appointment? Or perhaps he has only breakfasted well, and it is the feeling of health, of conscious vigour, that animates his whole body? Surely he can scarcely have yet had hung round his neck thy beautiful eight-pointed cross, O Polish King Stanislaus? *

* A Russian order.

No. He has hatched a calumny against a friend; he has spread it abroad with all zeal; has now heard it—this same calumny—from the mouth of another friend and has—given credence to it.

Oh, how contented—nay, how good at this moment—is this amiable, this promising young man!

February, 1878.

A Rule of Life.

WHEN you wish to provoke and irritate very effectually anyone of your enemies," said a Knowing One to me once, "charge him with the same faults or the same vice from which you yourself suffer. Pretend to be indignant and blame him!

"For, in the first place, that will lead others to think you yourself have not the same vice.

"Secondly, your indignation may be quite sincere, and you may even quiet your own conscience by the reproaches you heap on him.

"For example, if you are a renegade, cast in your opponent's teeth that he is a man of no settled convictions.

"If you are yourself a flunkey-soul, then tell him in reproachful tone that *he* is a flunkey—of no matter what: Civilization,* Culture, Socialism."

"At last he might, I suppose, be charged with being even a flunkey of Anti-flunkeyism?" I remarked.

"Indeed you might venture even that," replied my Knowing One.

February, 1878.

* West-European ways are often sneered at by those Russians who distrust what comes from abroad, under the name of (as Turgénieff writes the word elsewhere) "ci-vi-li-za-tion."—ED.

The End of the World.

A DREAM.

I DREAMT I was in some remote corner of Russia, in a lonely cottage.

③ Large and low is the three-windowed room; the walls are whitewashed; all furniture is wanting. Before the house stretches far into the distance a bare, gently-sloping plain. Like a great linen cloth, a monotonous grey sky hangs over it.

I am not alone. Some ten men are in the room, all of them ordinary people, simply clad. In silence, with gliding steps, they walk up and down. They make way for one another. But as they pass, their anxious eyes meet continually.

No one knows how he has come to be in this house, no one knows his companions. Uneasiness and anxiety are visible on every

face. All walk one after the other to the window and gaze expectantly, as if they awaited something from without.

Then once more they walk restlessly back and forward. Amongst them is a little boy; with monotonous, thin voice he whimpers from time to time:

“Father, I’m so frightened!”

This whimpering raises in me an anxious feeling—I too begin to fear. . . . Whom? What? I do not myself know. Only this one thing I feel: that a great, great catastrophe comes nearer and nearer. But the little one does not cease to whimper. Oh, can one not get away from this? How stifling and oppressive—to suffocation! But no escape is possible.

The sky is like a shroud. Not a breath is stirring. Has the air ceased to be?

Suddenly the little lad runs to the window and cries out in piteous voice: . . .

"Oh, look, look,—the ground has sunk away!"

"What? Sunk?"

So it was: formerly a plain stretched before the house—now it stands on the top of a great mountain!—The horizon has fallen—sunk down, and right in front of the house yawns a steep, cliff-like, dark abyss.

We all pressed to the window. Our hearts were numb with terror.

"*There, there!*" whispers my neighbour.

And behold—along the whole wide verge of the land something began to move; little round hills rise and fall in the distance.

"*The Sea!*" occurred to every mind at the same instant.

"It will swallow us in a moment! . . . But how can it grow and rise, to reach this steep height!"

Yet it rises—rises with giant strides. . . . Now it is no longer single hills that

heave up and down in the distance. One immense, continuous flood it is, which breaks in upon us from every point of the horizon.

Surging, surging, it comes upon us. On the wings of an icy storm-wind it roars along, gathering itself together like the darkness of hell. Everything around quakes—but *there*, in that advancing, formless mass is heard a roaring, thundering cry like the sound of a thousand brazen voices.

Ah, what bellowing and howling! The earth itself too groans and moans in terror.

Its end has come! The end of all things!

Once more is heard the whining of the little one. Now I will cling to my companions—but already we are all suffocated, buried, swallowed up, swept away by that pitch-black, icy, thundering flood.

Darkness . . . everlasting darkness!

Almost breathless, I awoke.

March, 1878.

Магѣа.*

WHEN I lived in St. Petersburg—many years have passed since then—I used always, when I hired a vehicle, to get into conversation with the driver. I specially liked having a talk with the night-drivers, poor peasants from the environs of Petersburg, who, in hopes of a modest profit—food for themselves and “obrok” † for their masters,—come with their yellow-painted sledges and miserable little hacks, into the capital.

I drove once with a man of this class. . . . He was a fellow of twenty, tall, powerful, and of fine appearance. He had blue eyes and red cheeks. His fair hair escaped in curly

* Diminutive of Maria.

† The fee paid by Russian serfs to their masters for liberty to work for themselves.

tufts from under his patched cap, which was tightly pressed down on his forehead. And how, I wonder, had he ever got that torn little smock over those gigantic shoulders!

But the good-looking, beardless face of the driver seemed to me gloomy and sad.

I fell into conversation with him. In his voice too I could detect sadness.

"What's wrong, my good fellow?" I asked. "Why are you so cast down? Are you suffering from any trouble?"

He did not immediately reply.

"Yes, sir, yes," he answered at last. "And indeed a trouble greater than any other trouble can be. My wife is dead."

"And you were very fond of her—this wife of yours?"

The young fellow did not turn round towards me; he only nodded.

"Yes, sir, I loved her. Eight months have already passed . . . but I cannot forget

her. There is a constant gnawing at my heart. . . . And why need she have died? She was so young, so healthy! . . . In one day the cholera carried her off."

"And was she good too?"

"Ah, sir!" said the poor fellow, with a deep sigh, "how fond we were of one another and how happily we lived together! And she died without me. When I heard of it here, she was already buried, and I at once hurried home to my native village. When I arrived, it was already past midnight. I walk into the cottage, stand in the middle of the room and call softly: 'Masha, Masha!' Only the cricket chirps. Then I begin to weep, sit down on the ground and strike the floor with my hands. . . . O greedy Earth! thou hast swallowed her . . . swallow me too! . . . ah, Masha!"

"Masha!" he added suddenly in a suppressed voice. And without letting go the

reins, he wiped the tears in his eyes with his glove, shook them off, shrugged his shoulders—and said not another word.

When I got out of the sledge, I gave him a small gratuity. He bowed low, took off his cap with both hands, and then drove slowly away—over the level snow of the lonely street, on which hung the grey mist of the frost of January.

April, 1878.

A Blockhead.

THERE was once a Blockhead.

For a long time he lived happy and contented, till at last the rumour reached his ears that he was generally regarded as a brainless fool.

That made the Blockhead melancholy, and he began in his dejection to think how he could put an end to this disagreeable report.

Suddenly a happy thought entered his empty head, and he lost no time in bringing it to bear.

He went out into the street and met an acquaintance, who spoke in glowing terms of a well-known painter.

"I beg your pardon!" answered the Blockhead, "why, that painter is long since obso-

lete! Don't you know that? Well, I shouldn't have expected that of you. In point of culture you are quite behind the age!"

The acquaintance was frightened, and at once assented to the Blockhead's opinion.

"Well, I have been reading an excellent work to-day," said another acquaintance to the Blockhead.

"Do you—*can* you really say so?" he observed, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself! That book isn't worth a rush—mere waste paper in fact. Don't you know that? Why, in point of culture you are *very* far behind!"

That acquaintance was also seized with fear and agreed with the Blockhead.

"A splendid fellow my friend—N. or M.," said a third acquaintance to the Blockhead; "indeed, a man of true nobility of soul!"

"Excuse me!" cried the Blockhead. "N. or M. is simply an arrant knave, who has

robbed all his acquaintances. Really in point of penetration you are still far behind ! ”

This third acquaintance was also afraid,—allowed that the Blockhead was right, and turned his back upon his friend N. or M. And whoever or whatever was mentioned in terms of praise in the presence of the Blockhead—he had the same answer ready.

At most, he added on occasion, in a tone of reproach, only this :

“ So you too are a believer in Authority ? ”

“ A malicious, bitter fellow ! ” — so his acquaintances expressed themselves in regard to him,—“ But what a *head* he has got ! ”

“ And that ready tongue of his ! ” added others. “ Truly, he is a man of talent. ”

The affair ended by the Editor of a journal handing over to our Blockhead the critical department of his paper.

Then our Blockhead began to criticise

everybody and everything—quite in his old style, and in the same terms.

And now he, the former assailant of authorities, is an authority himself, and the new generation reverence—and fear him.

What could the poor young people do? To reverence—well, to put it plainly, reverence is rather out of date. But let any one in this case try *not* to reverence, and he is at once set down as being, in respect of culture, far behind.

What a fine time of it a Blockhead has—among Cowards!

April, 1878.

An Eastern Tale.

WHO in Bagdad does not know great Jaffar, the Sun of the Universe?

Once upon a time, many many years ago, when he was yet a youth, Jaffar was strolling in the suburbs of Bagdad.

Suddenly there struck his ear a hoarse cry: some one was calling despairingly for help.

Now Jaffar was distinguished above his fellows by deliberation and caution; but his heart was sympathetic, and he could rely upon his bodily strength.

He followed the direction from which the cry proceeded, and saw a feeble old man pushed up against the city-wall by two robbers who were in the act of plundering him.

Jaffar drew his sword and fell upon the

villains. One he killed, the other he put to flight.

The old man thus liberated fell at the feet of his deliverer, and, kissing the hem of his garment, said :

“ Brave youth, thy magnanimity shall not remain unrewarded ! In outward appearance I am a poor beggar, but only in outward appearance. No ordinary man am I ! Come to-morrow, very early, to the chief market-place ; I will await thee at the fountain, and thou shalt be convinced of the truth of what I say.”

Jaffar thought to himself : “ In outward appearance, verily, the man is a beggar,—but nothing is impossible. Why should I not make the trial ? ”—And he answered :

“ Good, my father, I will come ! ”

The old man looked fixedly at him, and departed.

On the following morning, when it had

scarce begun to dawn, Jaffar repaired to the market-place.

Leaning on the marble basin of the fountain, the old man already awaited him. Without speaking, he took Jaffar by the hand and led him into a little garden, surrounded on all sides with high walls.

In the midst of the garden, on a small grass-plot, stood a tree of a very unusual appearance.

It resembled a cypress, save that its foliage was sky-blue.

Three apples hung on the thin, upward-bent branches: one was of middling size, rather long, and milk-white in colour; the second,—large, round and of a bright red; the third,—small, shrivelled and of a yellow hue. A gentle, rustling sound passed through the tree, although not a breath of air was stirring. A plaintive, delicate and, so to speak, glassy tone it was: it

seemed as if the tree felt the presence of Jaffar.

“Youth !” began the old man, “pluck according to thy choice, one of these fruits, and know : if thou pluckest and eatest the white, then shalt thou be the wisest of men ; if thou pluckest and eatest the red, then shalt thou be as rich as the Jew Rothschild. If thou pluckest and eatest the yellow, then shalt thou please all old women. Decide, and hesitate not ! In an hour the fruits wither, and the tree itself sinks into the silent bosom of the earth.”

Jaffar bent his head and reflected.

“What ought one to do in this case ?” said he half aloud, as if taking counsel with himself. “If thou becomest too wise, then wilt thou perhaps not wish to live any longer. If thou becomest richer than all others, then all men will envy thee ; 'twere best to pluck and eat the withered apple.”

That accordingly he did; and the old man laughed with his toothless mouth, and said :

“O wisest of all young men! thou hast made the best choice! What good can the white apple do thee? thou art, even without it, wiser than Solomon. Nor of the red apple hast thou need,—for without it thou shalt be rich. And thy riches will not expose thee to envy.”

“Tell me, old man,” responded Jaffar, trembling with joy: “where dwells the venerable mother of our gracious Caliph?”

The old man made a deep reverence and showed the youth the way. . . .

Who in Bagdad does not know the Sun of the Universe, the great, the renowned Jaffar?

April, 1878.

The Two Poets.

THERE was once a city, whose inhabitants were so passionately devoted to Poetry, that if only a few weeks elapsed without the production of excellent new verses, they regarded such poetic unfruitfulness as a misfortune threatening the common weal.

They attired themselves in their meanest garments, scattered ashes on their heads, and assembled themselves in crowds in the public squares, shed tears and uttered bitter reproaches against the Muses who had thus deserted them.

On one such miserable day the young poet JUNIUS appeared in the market-place where the wailing folk were surging hither and thither.

With quick step he mounted the platform—erected for the purpose—and indicated that he wished to recite a poem.

The lictors immediately made signs with their staffs of office.

“Silence! hearken!” they cried aloud, and the throng, full of expectation, was silent.

“Friends! comrades!” began Junius, in a strong, but rather unsteady voice:—

“All ye, beloved friends who honour poesy,
And cherish in your hearts the lovely and the right,
Ah, let not Sorrow's hour your whole life's tyrant be—
Behold, 'tis at an end, and darkness yields to light.”

Junius ceased—but for answer there echoed from all quarters of the market-place loud uproar, hissing and contemptuous laughter.

All the upturned faces flamed with indignation, all eyes gleamed with anger, all hands were raised and clenched threateningly.

“He will demand our admiration for that, will he?” yelled indignant voices. “Down

from the platform with this stupid rhymester !
Only look at the blockhead ! Rotten eggs and
apples here for this fool ! Fetch stones here
— stones !”

Junius sprang headlong off the platform
and fled. But he had not reached his house
when enthusiastic hand-clapping, loud ap-
plause and jubilation smote his ear.

Filled with doubt, but at the same time
taking care not to be observed—for it is a
dangerous business to irritate an infuriated
beast — Junius returned to the market-
place.

And what saw he there ?

High above the shoulders of the crowd,
standing on a flat golden shield, arrayed in a
purple robe, a laurel-wreath entwined in his
flowing locks,—he beheld his rival, the young
poet JULIUS. . . . And round him the people
were shouting :

“ Hail, hail, all hail to the immortal Julius !

In our sorrow, in our grievous woe he hath comforted us! He hath bestowed on us verses sweeter than honey, more melodious than the sound of cymbals, more fragrant than the breath of roses, purer than heaven's own azure. Bear him away in triumph. Cover his poetic head with aromatic thyme; cool his brow with the soft fanning of palm-leaves; scatter at his feet the fragrant myrrh of Araby. Hail to him, all hail!"

Junius drew near to one of the enthusiastic crowd:

"Pray tell me, my dear fellow-citizen, with what manner of verses Julius hath made you happy. Unfortunately I was not present when he recited them. Be so good as to repeat them to me, if you remember them—do me the favour!"

"How should one fail to remember *such* verses?" answered the other indignantly.

"What dost thou take me for? Listen and rejoice—rejoice with us!"

"All ye who honour verse,'—'twas thus the divine Julius began :

' All ye who honour verse, my friends beloved all,
Who cherish in your hearts the good and eke the
right,
O let not sorrow's force e'er drive you to the wall—
For see, 'tis past away, and day o'erwhelms the
night.'

"Is not that *splendid*?"

"Excuse me," cried Junius, "those are *my* verses! Julius must have been among the crowd when I recited them; he heard and repeated them, only altering a few expressions and these by no means for the better!"

"Aha! I know thee; thou art Junius," cried the citizen, frowning. "Thou art an envious fellow or a blockhead! Bethink thee, wretch: how sublime is the expression of Julius: '*And day o'erwhelms the night!*' Thou on the contrary sayst—and, good heavens,

what stuff it is: 'And darkness yields to light!' *What* light, pray? *What* darkness?"

"But isn't it all the same?" replied Junius.

"Say but another word," said the citizen, interrupting him, "and I inform the people, and they will certainly tear thee in pieces!"

Junius was prudent enough to be silent. A white-haired old man, who had overheard his conversation with the citizen, came up to the poor poet and laying his hand on his shoulder, said:

"Junius, you gave your own verses—but not at the right time; yonder fellow gave us another's—but at the right time. Consequently he wins, but to you remains the happy consciousness of—good intentions."

While therefore a good conscience was comforting as well as it could—that is, truth to tell, very badly—our poor Junius, who now shrunk aside,—the triumphant figure of Julius was seen in the distance gliding in stately

slowness away, amidst loud cries of jubilation and applause, in the golden, triumphant glory of the sun-god, clad in brilliant purple, breathing the odours of thyme, and adorned with shady laurel—like a conqueror who mounts his throne. . . . And the long palm-branches rose and fell before him, as if they by their gentle rising and their humble bending would express that honour, ever renewed, which filled the enthusiastic hearts of his fellow-citizens.

April, 1878.

The Sparrow.

I WAS coming back from shooting, and was passing along a garden-walk. My dog was running before me. Suddenly he began to move slowly and then to creep along as if he scented game.

I looked down the walk and spied a young sparrow with yellow-edged beak and young down upon its head. It had fallen out of the nest—a strong wind was shaking the birch-trees along the walk,—and there it sat motionless, helplessly flapping its hardly-formed wings.

My dog was going up to it slowly, when suddenly from the tree near at hand, an old black-breasted sparrow darted down,—like a stone it flung itself right before the dog's nose,

and, distracted and wild, it again and again sprang, with despairing, anguished shriek, straight at his wide-opened jaws and white teeth,

It wished to save its young—it protected its young with its own body. The tiny creature shook with alarm, its little voice became wild and hoarse—it was in mortal terror, it offered itself as a sacrifice!

What a terrible monster must the dog have appeared to it! And yet it could not remain up on its safe bough. A power stronger than its will hurried it down.

My *Trésor* stopped and then turned back. Clearly, even he was compelled to recognise this power. I called up the dog—amazed as he was—and went away, with a feeling of reverence.

Nay, never smile: I really felt *reverence* in the presence of that heroic little bird, and the passionate outburst of its love.

Love, thought I, is stronger even than death and the pains of death. Only through it, only through Love, is Life itself sustained and inspired.

April, 1878.

The Skulls.

A S P L E N D I D , beautifully - lighted drawing-room, in it a motley crowd of gentlemen and ladies.

All faces are animated; lively conversation is going on. Subject of talk—a celebrated singer. She is called divine, immortal. Oh, how charmingly she warbled out yesterday her last trill!

And suddenly—as by the wave of an enchanter's wand—the tender skin fell away from all heads, from all faces, and immediately appeared the death-pallor of the skulls; and the fleshless jaws and cheek-bones shone dull like lead.

And with terror I beheld how those cheek-bones rose and fell, how those rough bony balls, gleaming in the light of the lamps and

candles, moved and turned, and how other, smaller balls—the eye-balls namely—moved about in them. I did not venture to touch my own face, or to look at myself in the mirror. But the skulls moved and turned as before. And like little bits of red cloth gleamed and murmured, behind the grinning teeth, the nimble tongues, in subdued tones,—and the theme still was: how wonderfully, how inimitably, the immortal—yes, the immortal—singer had warbled forth her last trill!

April, 1878.

The Working Men and the Man with the White Hands.

A DIALOGUE.

Working Man :

“**W**HAT d’ ye want among us? What are ye up to? You ‘ain’t one of us, *you* ain’t. Clear out, I advise you !”

The Man with the White Hands :

“I belong to you, dear brothers.”

Working Man :

“‘Ere’s a go! The idear! Look ye ‘ere at my ‘ands. Don’t ye see how dirty they be? They smell of tar and muck;—*your* hands are clean and white, and what do *they* smell of?”

The Man with the White Hands :

“Smell them !”

Working Man (smelling the other's hands) :

“What? Blowed if they don't smell of iron !”

The Man with the White Hands :

“You are right,—of iron. For six long years they bore heavy chains.”

Working Man :

“What for?”

The Man with the White Hands :

“Why, because I was interested in your welfare, because I wished to emancipate you, poor ignorant men, because I stood up in revolt against your oppressors. That is why I was put in chains.”

Working Man :

“Locked up? But *who told you* to get up this yer rewolt?”

* * * * *

(TWO YEARS AFTER.)

First Working Man:

"I say, Peter! Don't yer remember as 'ow two year ago one of these yer white-anded swells 'ad a talk with you?"

Second Working Man:

"I remember. . . . What about him now?"

First Working Man:

"Don't yer know 'e 's got to be 'anged to-day? That 's the order."

Second Working Man:

"'As he been and rewolted again?"

First Working Man:

"Of course he has rewolted."

Second Working Man:

"H'm. . . . I'll tell you what, Dmitry. 'Appy thought: *git the rope as 'anged 'im.* They do say it brings rare good luck to a 'ouse."

First Working Man :

"Right you are. We'll have a try, old man." *

April, 1878.

*A very effective commentary on this dialogue is furnished by Turgénieff in his *Terres Vierges (Virgin Soil)*, Chap. XXXIII., in which is described the attempt of the unfortunate Néjdanoff to rouse the Russian peasants and artisans to revolt. It is the story of the *Needy Knife-Grinder* over again,—only the *Friend of Humanity* gets very roughly handled by those whom he wished to serve.—The above dialogue was not inserted in the Russian Edition, on account of the press-censorship.—ED.

The Rose.

IT was in the last days of August. . . .
Autumn was already approaching.

☉ The sun was disappearing below the horizon. A sudden, violent shower of rain had just swept across the country.

The garden before the house glowed in the light of the setting sun and was bathed in vapour from the recent rain-storm.

She sat in the drawing-room, at the table, and, lost in thought, gazed out through the half-open door into the garden.

I knew what was passing in her mind : I knew that after a short but painful conflict she was at that moment yielding to a feeling which she was no longer able to control.

Suddenly she rose, walked quickly into the garden—and disappeared.

An hour passed . . . and a second hour; and she did not return.

Then I rose, left the house, and turned into the walk by which, as I very well knew, she had gone.

Darkness reigned around; it was already night. I observed on the wet gravel of the garden-walk a round object, which shone out red even through the all-enveloping darkness.

I stooped down. It was a young, hardly-blown rose. Two hours ago I had seen it on her breast.

I carefully lifted the fallen flower, and returning to the room laid it on the table, before her chair.

At last she returned. With a light step she walked across the room and seated herself at the table.

Her face was paler but more animated; quickly, with a certain lively yet embarrassed air, she looked anxiously, with downcast eyes, round the room.

At last she saw the rose. She took it in her hand, looked at its crumpled, soiled leaves, glanced over at me — and in her eyes, which suddenly ceased to wander, tears glistened.

“What are you weeping for?” I asked.

“About this rose. See what has happened to it.”

Then it occurred to me to say something profound.

“Your tears will wash away the mud,” said I significantly.

“Tears wash away nothing, they only scorch,” she answered, turning to the fireplace and throwing the flower into the dying flame.

“Fire scorches even better than tears,” she

cried, with a certain audacity; and the lovely eyes, still glistening with tears, smiled — defiant and happy.

I perceived that she too had been scorched.

April, 1878.

In Memoriam I. P. W—skaya.

IN a small Bulgarian village wrecked and devastated by war, under the miserable shelter afforded by the roof of a tumble-down shed that had been quickly turned into a field-hospital—in the dirt, on a bed of damp, musty straw—she died, some fourteen days ago, of typhus.

She lay in the ravings of the fever,—not a single doctor troubled himself about her. The sick soldiers whom she had nursed as long as she could stand on her feet, raised themselves by turns from their infected beds, to bring—in a fragment of a drinking-cup—a few drops of water to her parched lips.

She was young and beautiful: the upper ranks of society knew her; even high dignitaries were accustomed to pay her attention.

The women envied her, the men paid court to her; some of them were, in secret, passionately in love with her. Life smiled upon her; but there is a smile that is worse than tears.

So soft, so gentle was her heart . . . and yet it had such power, such courage in self-sacrifice! To help the helpless — she knew no other happiness. . . . Knew it not, and was never to know it. All other happiness passed by her. To this she had long since resigned herself, and with inextinguishable, glowing zeal begotten of faith, she devoted herself to the service of her fellow-creatures.

What imperishable treasures she concealed in the depths of her soul—in the most secret corner of her heart—no one ever knew,—and of course nobody now will ever find out.

And to what purpose? The sacrifice has been offered . . . the work ended.

Yet it is a sad thought that even to her dead body there was no one to say *thank you*, though, in her lifetime, she herself modestly refused every word of thanks.

May her dear shade not be offended that now I venture to lay this belated floweret on her grave.*

September, 1878.

* The incident referred to in this piece occurred during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8.—Ed.

The Last Good-bye.

ONCE we were close friends. . . .
But there came an unhappy moment
—and we parted as enemies.

Many years elapsed. . . . Then I was passing through the town he lived in ; I heard that he lay hopelessly ill, and that he wished to see me.

I went, I entered his chamber, our eyes met.

I hardly recognised him. Good God, what a change disease had wrought in him !

Yellow, withered, perfectly bald, with scanty grey beard, there he sat, having on him but one garment, and that specially made for him. . . . The pressure of the lightest clothing he could not bear. Hurriedly he stretched forth to me his fearfully thin, withered hand, and painfully murmured some unintelligible words—whether words of we!

come or of reproach, who can tell? The weakened, sunken breast began to heave, and over the contracted pupils of the inflamed eyes rolled two small painfully-burning tears.

My heart seemed to shrink within me. . . . I sat down beside him—and involuntarily dropping my eyes before that fearful wreck, I also held out my hand.

But it seemed to me as if he did not grasp my hand.

It seemed to me as if there sat between us a tall, silent, white figure. A long robe enveloped her from head to foot. The deep, pale eyes gazed into vacancy; no sound issued from those wan, stern lips. . . .

This figure had joined our hands. . . . It had reconciled us for ever.

Yes. Death had reconciled us.*

April, 1878.

* The friend here mentioned was the distinguished lyric poet Nekrassoff, author of *Who Lives Happily in Russia?*—Among the Russians Death is regarded as a female.—ED.

A Visit.

I SAT at the open window . . . early, very early on the morning of the first of May.

The horizon was not yet red with the glow of morning, but it had already become pale; and the dark, mild night was passing into the chill hour of dawn.

The mist had not yet cleared away, no wind was stirring; all objects seemed of the same colour; all around, deep silence—but already Nature was announcing her near awakening, and the thin air spread abroad a keen, moist odour of dew.

Suddenly, with a slight rustling sound, a large bird flew through the open window into the room.

I trembled and looked. . . . It was not a bird; it was a small winged female figure in a close-fitting, long, flowing robe.

She was all grey—a mother-of-pearl grey; only the inner side of her pinions showed the tender pink of the opening rose; a wreath of lily-of-the-valley encircled the waving curls on her tiny head, and above the fair oval brow two peacock's feathers waved prettily, like the feelers of a butterfly.

She flew once or twice round the room; her little face smiled; her large, black, bright eyes, flashing like diamonds in her flight, smiled too. . . .

She held in her hand the long stalk of a flower of the steppe: "Tsar's sceptre" the Russians call it—and in truth it resembles a sceptre.

Flying quickly above me, she touched my head with the flower.

I stretched out my hands towards her. . . .

But she had already fluttered out at the window—and then flew away. .

In the garden, in the most secret recess of an elder-plantation, a dove greeted her with its earliest coo; and there—where she appeared in the distance the milk-white sky was slowly beginning to redden towards the dawn.

I had recognised thee, Goddess of Fancy!
By chance thou didst visit me—on thy way
to younger poets.

O Poesy, youth, maiden beauty! Only at
certain moments can ye bestow glory on my
life—in the early morning hour, when spring
begins!

May, 1878.

Necessitas—Vis—Libertas.

A BASRELIEF.

A TALL, bony woman advanced in years, with iron countenance and fixed, apathetic look, walks along with great strides and pushes before her, with her hard, dry hand, a second female figure.

The second is of colossal stature and of powerful build, has Herculean muscles and a tiny head upon a bull-neck. She is blind. Before her she drives a slender girl.

This girl alone has eyes that see; she is refractory, turns back, lifts up her tender, pretty hands. Impatience and boldness are stamped upon her countenance. She wants

not to obey, wishes not to go whither they drive her. . . . And yet she must yield obedience—and go.

Necessitas—Vis—Libertas.

Translate who will!

May, 1878.

The Alms.

IN the neighbourhood of a great city, on the broad high-road, walked a sick old man.

He tottered in his gait, his fleshless feet moved with difficulty and uncertainty, stumbled and shuffled as if they did not belong to him ; his clothing hung down in rags ; his uncovered head had fallen on his breast.

His strength was totally exhausted.

He sat down on a stone by the wayside, bent forward, rested his elbows on his knees, and covered his face with both hands,—tears fell through the bent fingers on the dry, grey dust.

He was thinking of the past.

He remembered how he was once healthy

and rich, how he then lost his health and bestowed his riches on friends and foes. . . .

Alas, and now he has not so much as a piece of bread,—they have all forsaken him, the friends even before the foes! Must he humiliate himself so far as to beg for alms? At this thought deep shame filled his heart.

And his tears ran and ran, forming figures in the dust.

Suddenly he heard someone call him by name. He raised his weary head and saw a Person Unknown standing before him.

His face was calm and dignified, but there was no severity in it; his eyes seemed clear rather than flashing; his look was penetrating, but not ill-natured.

"Thou hast distributed all thy riches," began the Unknown in a gentle voice. "Dost thou not regret the good deeds thou hast done?"

"I do not regret them," answered the old

man with a sigh ; "even though now I must die of hunger."

"Well, if there had been no beggars to hold out their hands to thee," continued the Unknown, "of course thou hadst not had an opportunity to show thy benevolent disposition ? "

The old man answered nothing, but reflected.

"Well then, do not thou be proud, poor old man," resumed the Unknown ; "look up, reach out thy hand, and now give to other good men the opportunity to show by deeds *their* kindness of heart."

The old man started back and raised his eyes, but the Unknown had disappeared. In the distance someone came along the road.

The old man approached the traveller and held out his hand. But with a cold look the other turned away and gave him nothing.

But then came along a second traveller, and he bestowed on the old man a small alms.

And the old man bought for himself bread to the value of the coin received; and the morsel he had obtained by begging tasted sweet, and no feeling of shame was any longer in his heart: on the contrary, a calm joy returned to his soul.

May, 1878.

The Insect.

I DREAMT that some twenty of us sat in a large apartment with open windows.

Women, children, old people were of the company. . . . The conversation was about everyday topics, and was carried on in a loud and confused manner.

Suddenly there buzzed into the room, with a harsh noise, a large insect some three inches in length . . . buzzed in, flew round once or twice and lighted on the wall.

It had some resemblance to a fly or a wasp. The body was a dirty brown ; the flat, coarse wings were of the same colour ; the outspread feet were feathered ; the head was large and angular, like the head of a dragon-fly ; and

the head and feet were of a light red — like blood.

This strange insect kept moving its feet and turned its head incessantly—up and down, right and left. Then it suddenly darted off the wall, flew buzzing through the room—and again settled, and, once more, without moving from the spot, it began its unpleasant, painful wriggings.

It produced in all of us disgust and fear—nay, almost terror . . . None of us had ever seen the like; all cried: "Drive the monster out!" By way of defence all flourished their pocket-handkerchiefs—at a safe distance . . . none ventured near . . . and when the insect flew up, all rushed aside pell-mell.

Only one of the company, a young man with a pale countenance, looked on us all with wondering eyes. He shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and could not understand

what was the matter with us, and why we were so much excited. *He* saw no insect; *he* did not hear the unpleasant buzzing of its wings.

Suddenly the insect seemed to look straight at him, flew up, lighted on his head, clung close, and pierced him above the eyes right through to the brain.

The young man gave a low moan—and fell dead on the floor.

The uncanny thing immediately buzzed off . . . Only then did we divine what sort of guest had visited us!

May, 1878.

Cabbage Soup.

FROM an old widow Death snatched her only son, a young man of two-and-twenty,—he was the best labourer in the village.

The great lady, the owner of this village, heard of the affliction that had befallen the widow, and came to see her on the day of the funeral.

She found her in the house.

Standing in the middle of the room at the table, she was lifting with her right hand (her left hung down powerless), with slow regular movement, some thin cabbage soup out of a sooty pot, and was carrying the spoon steadily to her mouth.

The face of the old creature was sad and worn, the eyes red and swollen; but her

manner was calm and collected—as if she were at church.

“Dear me!” thought the great lady. “In such a moment she can still eat. . . . What coarse feelings all these people have, to be sure!”

And the great lady remembered how she, some years before, when she lost her little daughter of nine months old, had, from grief, actually abstained from taking a beautiful villa near St. Petersburg, and had remained in town all the summer. . . . And still the old woman was eating her cabbage soup.

● At length the great lady could no longer restrain herself.

“Good heavens, Tatiana!” she cried, “I am amazed! You surely cannot have loved your son? You have not lost even your appetite! How *can* you eat that cabbage soup?”

“My Vassya is dead,” returned the old

peasant woman in a low voice, and the bitter tears rolled anew over her shrunken cheeks. "My end too is not far off! I have lost all. But I cannot let the cabbage soup be wasted; it has been salted, you know."

The great lady only shrugged her shoulders—and departed. Salt did not cost *her* much!*

May, 1878.

* Salt is subject to a heavy tax in Russia, almost as heavy as the *gabelle* or salt-tax in pre-revolutionary France.—Taxation bears very heavily on the poor in Russia. A peasant family with an annual income of £12 5s. would pay in Imperial taxes £2 5s., or near a sixth of the whole.—See Wallace's *Russia*, Vol. I., p. 177.—Ed.

The Fields of the Blest.

O FIELDS of the blest! O azure kingdom of light, youth, and happiness! I have beheld you . . . in dreams.

I sat with a number of companions on a stately, beautifully-adorned vessel. Like the breast of a swan the swelling sail rounded itself under the gay streamers.

I did not know my companions; but I felt with my whole soul that they were young, glad and happy, like myself.

I did not even look at them. I saw around only the shoreless, azure sea, which, in the play of the waves, was covered with what looked like golden scales. And above my head the same shoreless, azure sea—in which the kindly-smiling sun moved in triumph.

Clear-ringing, joyous laughter resounded from time to time in the midst of us—like the laughter of the gods !

Then suddenly there sounded from some mouth, words—verses of wondrous beauty and inspired power. . . . The sky seemed even to sound in answer to them ; and round about us the sea seemed to tremble in sympathy. . . . And there followed a blessed stillness.

Lightly dipping in the yielding flood, our skiff sped on apace. No wind drove it along—our own joyous hearts directed its course. Whither we would—thither it floated obediently, as if endowed with life.

Islands — enchanting, half - transparent islands, sparkling with precious stones, emeralds and rubies, — swept past us. Intoxicating odours arose from the circling shores ; here we were covered with a rain of white roses and lilies ; there rainbow-

coloured birds suddenly shot up to heaven on long pinions.

And the birds circled above our heads and the roses and lilies melted as it were into the pearly foam which glided beneath the smooth sides of our skiff.

Along with the flowers and the birds there floated towards us sweet, sweet tones . . . enchanting female voices were wafted to our ears. . . . And everything around—the sky, the sea, the flapping sails above, the murmuring of the water in the wake of our little vessel—all spake of love, of blissful love! . . .

And the Beloved, whom each had chosen for himself, was near, though unseen. Yet a moment and her eye sparkles, her face smiles . . . her hand clasps thine, and leads thee along to an eternal paradise.

O fields of the Blest, I have beheld you . . . in dreams.

June, 1878.

Which is the Richer?

WHEN in my hearing rich Rothschild is praised—who gives away thousands from his huge income, whereby children are educated, the sick healed, and old people taken care of,—I am touched, and praise such deeds.

But in spite of my feeling and the praise I bestow, I cannot help calling to mind a poor peasant family who once received an orphaned relative into its miserable hut.

“If we take home little Katie,” said the wife, “the last penny will go; we shan’t be able any longer to buy even salt for our soup.”

“Well, then we can eat it without salt,” said her husband.

It is a far cry from Rothschild to that peasant!*

July, 1878.

* See above, p. 86, *Cabbage Soup*.—Ed.

The Old Man.

GLOOMY, heavy days have begun. Thine own sufferings, the troubles of loved ones, the coldness and darkness of old age. Everything that thine heart has clung to, everything to which thou hast been devoted, passes away and disappears.

The road leads downhill.

What remains then to do? Shalt thou complain and fret? *That* affords satisfaction neither to thyself nor to others.

Thinner and scantier becomes the foliage on the bent, slowly-dying tree,—but its verdure remains always the same.

Well, do thou too bend thyself, retire into thyself, betake thee to the world of thy memories,—and there, in the deepest deep, in

the innermost recess of thy soul, thy past life—the life that thou alone hast access to—will shine out before thee in its most glorious vernal power—in its fragrant and ever-fresh greenness.

But have a care, old man—*look not forward!*

July, 1878.

The Reporter.

TWO friends were sitting at table drinking tea.

Suddenly a loud noise arose in the street. Piteous groans, violent insulting words and loud peals of malicious laughter.

"Somebody is getting a thrashing there," remarked one of the friends, looking out of the window.

"A criminal, a murderer?" asked the other. "I say: whoever it is, we must not allow him to be executed outright without lawful sentence passed. Come, let us interfere on his behalf!"

"Ah, but the man they are thrashing is not a murderer."

"Not a murderer? Well, then a thief?"

'Tis all one; we must rescue him from the mob."

"No, nor a thief either."

"Not a thief? Well, then perhaps a cashier or a railway-swindler, or an army-contractor, a Russian art-patron, an attorney, an Able Editor, a noble soul that sacrifices itself for the public good? Whoever he is, we must help him."

"You haven't hit it. They are only thrashing a newspaper reporter."

"A reporter?—Oh, that's it?—Perhaps we had better finish our tea first?" *

July, 1878.

* This is a sketch from the Russia of thirty years ago.—Ed.

The Two Brothers.

I HAD a vision.

There appeared to me two angels
 . . . two genii.

I say angels and genii, because the bodies of both were unclothed, and each of them was furnished with two long and mighty wings.

Both were youths. The one had somewhat voluptuous limbs, a delicate skin and dark locks. His brown eyes rolled, bright as fire, under their thick lashes; his look was insinuating, cheerful, sensual. Graceful and charming was his countenance, now bold to rashness, anon somewhat malicious in expression. The full, deep-red lips trembled softly. The youth smiles like a potentate,—his smile

denotes at once self-confidence and indolence. A luxuriantly beautiful wreath of flowers is lightly entwined in his glistening locks and almost touches his smooth brow. A spotted leopard's-skin fastened with a golden arrow falls lightly down from the softly outlined shoulder to the rounded hip. The plumage of the wings sends forth a rosy gleam, their tips are of a bright red, as if they had been steeped in purple-coloured, fresh blood. From time to time they quiver rapidly with a silvery rustle—like the sound of rain in spring.

The other youth is thin, and his skin is sallow. At every breath he draws his ribs are visible. His hair is fair, thin and straight; unusually large, round, pale-grey eyes. . . . The look—restless, with a strange gleam in it. All the features sharp; the small half-open mouth displaying fish teeth; a pinched aquiline nose, a projecting chin,

covered with whitish down. Never yet—no, not even once!—have those thin lips smiled.

What a forbidding, stiffly-regular, unsympathetic face! (The countenance of the other also—the lovely youth,—though pleasing and gracious, is likewise void of the least expression of sympathy.) Round that stern head are wound some barren, withered ears of corn, held together by a withered stalk. A coarse grey garment is tied round his loins; his dusky-blue, lustreless pinions move slowly and menacingly.

The two youths appeared to be inseparable companions.

They leaned one on the shoulder of the other. The small, delicate hand of the one hung down like a bunch of grapes on the skinny shoulder of the other; the emaciated hand of the other, with its thin, long fingers, stretched like a snake over the femininely-

soft bosom of the first. And I heard a voice which spake these words :

“Before thee stand Love and Hunger—two own-brothers, the two main pillars of all Life.

“Everything that lives, moves in order to nourish itself, and nourishes itself, in order to propagate itself.

“Love and Hunger—they have both of them one and the same object : to prevent life from ceasing—the life of the individual as well as that other life—the life of the whole.”

August, 1878.

The Egoist.

HE possessed every quality necessary to make him—the scourge of his family.

He had come into the world healthy and rich,—and remained healthy and rich during the whole of his long life; he was chargeable with not one single slip, he committed not one single blunder in word or deed.

He was of spotless integrity! . . . And, proud in the consciousness of his integrity, he crushed everybody to the earth with it: relations, friends, acquaintances.

His integrity was for him a sort of capital—and he traded on this capital.

Integrity gave him the right to be merciless, and to do only the good that is enjoined by the law. . . . And he was merciless,

and did nothing that was good, . . . for goodness that is prescribed is no goodness at all.

He never troubled himself about anybody save his own exemplary self; and he was exceedingly indignant if others were not likewise deeply interested in the same.

Moreover, he did not look upon himself as an egoist,—and there was nothing he despised, nothing he pursued with more unrelenting hostility than egoism and egoists! . . . Naturally: another's egoism was in the way of his own.

As he knew himself to be free from the slightest weakness, so he could neither comprehend nor tolerate weakness in others. On the whole, he comprehended nobody and nothing; for he was completely, on all sides, above and below, before and behind, surrounded—by himself.

He did not even comprehend what is called

forgiveness. To himself he had nothing to forgive . . . What need had he then to forgive others?

Before the tribunal of his own conscience, before the face of his own deity, he, this miracle, this monster of virtue, lifted up his eyes to heaven and said with clear, unfaltering voice: "Yes, I am a man of true worth, a man of stainless morality!"

These words he will repeat on his death-bed,—and even in that moment all will be calm in that stony heart—in that heart without blemish and without spot.

O hideousness of self-complacent, unyielding, cheap virtue—art thou not more repellant than the open hideousness of vice!

December, 1878.

Jupiter's Feast.

JUPITER once made a great feast in his azure palace.

All the Virtues were invited. But only the female Virtues . . . no gentlemen . . . only ladies.

A good many were present, great and small. The small Virtues were more agreeable and amiable than the great ones; but all seemed very much pleased; and they conversed with one another in the friendliest manner possible,—as indeed is only becoming among near relations and acquaintances.

But Jupiter observed two fair ladies who did not seem to be acquainted with each other.

The Host therefore took one of these ladies by the hand and led her to the other.

"*Beneficence !*" said he, pointing to the one.

"*Gratitude !*" he added, pointing to the other.

The two Virtues were in the highest degree amazed ! From the creation of the world—and that was long ago—they had never met before !

December, 1878.



The Sphinx.

YELLOWISH-GREY sand, on the surface—loose; below—hard, grating;—sand, sand without end, whithersoever thou lookest.

And above this sand-waste, this sea of dead dust, rises the giant-head of the Egyptian Sphinx.

What do they mean—those huge, swollen lips, those motionless, open, upturned nostrils, and those eyes—those long, half-sleepy, half-noticing eyes under the double-arched, lofty brows?

Surely they mean something! Yes, truly, they even speak, but only Œdipus knows how to interpret their silent language, to solve the riddle they propound. . . .

But see! Surely I recognise *these* features! They have no longer anything Egyptian

about them. A low white forehead, high cheek-bones, a short straight nose, a good mouth with white teeth, a thin moustache and short curly beard—and those eyes so wide apart! and on the head a shock of hair, parted from the crown down the middle. Ah, so it is *thou*, my Karp, my Ssidor, my Semyon, a peasant of Jaroslav, of Riazan,—my countryman, my Russian flesh and blood! How hast *thou* come to be among the sphinxes? Hast thou anything to say? Of course thou hast, for thou too art a sphinx. Thine eyes also—those colourless, but deep eyes—they, too, speak. And their language also is mute and enigmatical.

Meantime, where is thy *Ædipus*?

Ah, it is no good putting on the peasant's cap; that does not make thy *Ædipus*, thou Russian Sphinx!*

December, 1878.

* This last remark is directed against the extreme Slavophiles, who try to win the favour of the multitude by adopting the national peasant costume.—LANGE.

The Nymphs.

I STOOD before a noble chain of mountains stretching round in a semi-circle. A young, green forest covered them from their summits to their base. Blue and clear above them shone the southern sky. The sun's rays played on high; below, half concealed in the grass, murmured running brooks. And an old legend came into my mind, how once upon a time, in the first century after the birth of Christ, a Greek vessel was crossing the Aegean Sea.

It was about mid-day. The winds slept—when suddenly, high above the steersman's head, a voice called out the words: "When thou sailest past that island, cry aloud: 'Great Pan is dead!'"

The steersman was astonished and terrified. But when the ship passed the island, he obeyed and cried : "Great Pan is dead !"

And immediately there arose, in answer to his cry along the whole coast (though the island was uninhabited), a loud sighing and groaning ; and long, wailing sounds echoed : "Dead, dead is great Pan !"

Well, this legend occurred to me ; and a strange idea passed through my mind : What if I too should cry out ? In such joyous surroundings, however, I could not think on death, and therefore I cried out with all my might : "Risen, risen is great Pan !"

And immediately—behold a wonder !—there echoed, in answer to my cry in the whole wide half-circle of green mountains, a joyous burst of laughter, and there arose joyous talking and clapping of hands. "He is risen, Pan is risen !" was sounded forth by youthful voices. Everything before me

suddenly broke into laughter—clearer than the sun's rays overhead, merrier than the joyous brooks which murmured beneath the grass. The hurrying tread of light feet became audible; through the foliage gleamed pure white robes and the living glow of naked bodies. . . . Nymphs, Dryads, Bacchantes were hurrying from the high grounds into the valley!

Suddenly they have become visible at all points; long tresses stream down from their godlike heads; their lovely hands bear garlands and cymbals, and the sound of laughter, clear Olympian laughter, hurries, rising and falling, along with them.

Before them moves a goddess. She is taller and fairer than the rest; from her shoulder hangs a quiver; in her hand she carries a bow, and above her waving tresses gleams a silver crescent-moon.

Diana—is it thou?

But suddenly the goddess stops, and immediately all the nymphs do likewise. The clear-toned laughter dies away. I saw how a death-like pallor suddenly overspread the face of the now silent goddess; I saw how her feet became rooted to the earth, how in unspeakable pain her mouth opened, and her eyes, staring into the distance, opened wider and wider. What had she caught sight of, at what was she gazing ?

I turned in the direction in which she looked. . . .

On the farthest verge of the heavens, beyond the belt of level fields, gleamed, like a point of fire, the golden Cross on the white tower of a Christian church. . . . It was *that cross* the goddess had caught sight of.

I heard behind me a long trembling sigh, like the vibration of the snapped string of a lute; and when I turned round, of the nymphs I saw not a trace. As before, the forest

stretched far away in all its greenness, and only here and there, gradually fading away, something white was visible among the branches. Whether it were the garments of the nymphs, or that a misty vapour was arising from the low valley—I cannot tell.

But ah, how I grieved for the vanished goddesses !

December, 1878.

Friend and Foe.

A MAN condemned to perpetual imprisonment had escaped, and sought safety in precipitate flight. . . . The pursuers were at his heels.

He ran with all his might. . . . The distance between him and them became every moment greater.

But suddenly he sees before him a river with steep banks—a river, narrow, but deep . . . and he cannot swim!

A thin, half-rotten plank spans the stream. The fugitive had already placed his foot upon it. . . . Now, by chance there stood on the river-bank his best friend and his bitterest foe.

His enemy did not say a word: he merely

folded his arms; his friend, on the contrary, cried out :

“ For God’s sake, consider, madman, what thou doest ! Dost thou not see that the plank is quite rotten ? . . . It will break under thy weight,—and thou art irretrievably lost ! ”

“ But there is no other means of safety; and the pursuers, hark ! they are even now at hand ! ” groaned the wretched fugitive in despair ; and with that he stepped on the plank.

“ That I will not allow ! No, I will not allow thee to destroy thyself before my eyes,” cried the zealous friend ; and he dragged the plank from beneath the feet of the fugitive.

He fell headlong into the rushing waters—to rise no more.

The enemy smiled and went his way. But the friend sat down on the bank and began to weep bitterly for his poor, poor friend !

But it did not for a moment occur to him to

charge himself with having caused his friend's death!

"He would not listen to me—would not listen," he murmured disconsolately.

"After all," said he at length, "he would have had to pass his life in sorrow in a fearful prison-house. Now he is at least freed from his sufferings! Now he is better off! Manifestly fate had so ordered it.

"And yet, how lamentable is his case, from the merely human point of view!"

And the good soul continued to shed hot tears for his unfortunate friend, and refused to be comforted.

December, 1878.

Christ.

I ONCE found myself, when a young man, as yet hardly more than a boy, in a humble village church. . . . The thin wax candles appeared like small red points before the images of the saints.

A small, rainbow-coloured halo surrounded each of those little flames. It was dark and gloomy in the church. . . . But a crowd of men stood in front of me. Only fair-haired peasant heads. From time to time they bowed, bent down and rose again—like ripe ears of corn when the summer wind, like a slowly-moving wave, passes over them.

All at once some one came up to me from behind and stood beside me. I did not turn round; but I immediately felt that this man

—was Christ. Emotion, curiosity and fear suddenly took possession of me. I controlled myself. . . . and looked at my neighbour.

A face like that of all others,—it resembled absolutely all other human faces. The eyes, calm and attentive, are raised a little toward heaven. The lips are closed, but not compressed; it is as though the upper lip rested on the under; the slight beard is parted in the middle. The hands are folded and motionless. In his dress also he does not differ from the others.

“How can that be Christ!” thought I. “Such a simple, quite ordinary human being! It is impossible!”

I turned away. . . . Yet scarcely had I withdrawn my glance from this simple human being, when I again felt as if Christ stood at my side.

Yet once more I forced myself and looked again on the same face, which resembled all

other human faces — looked on the same ordinary, though unknown features.

Suddenly I felt my heart heavy—and I came to myself. Only then did I perceive that just such a face—one that resembles all human faces—is the face of Christ.

December, 1878.

1879-1882.

The Stone.

HAVE you ever seen on the sea-shore an old grey stone, when, in sunny days of spring, at the time of the flowing tide, the rushing waves strike against it, play with it, caress it, and sprinkle its seaweed-covered head with light, glancing pearls of foam?

The stone remains as it was,—but upon its dark-grey surface is seen a play of bright colours.

They bear witness of that far-off time when the molten granite had just begun to harden and was yet all aglow with fiery tints.

So of late my old heart was stormed on all sides by lovely young souls,—and under their caressing touch those long-since-faded colours, traces of former fires, once more

broke out in glowing red! The waves have surged back again, but the colours have not yet faded, though a biting wind has dried them up.

May, 1879.

The Doves.

I STOOD upon the highest point of a gently sloping hill. Before me stretched a ripe field of rye like to a gold-and-silver-glancing sea.

But over this sea moved no waves; the stifling air was still; a great tempest was slowly gathering.

All around was hot, dull sunshine; but there—on the other side of the rye-field, at no great distance, a mass of dark-blue cloud covered the entire half of the horizon. All nature was silent . . . everything was, as it were, fading away under the ominous glare of the last beams of the sun. Not a solitary bird was to be seen or heard: even the sparrows had gone into hiding. Only

somewhere near me a solitary, heavy burdock-leaf rustled.

What a powerful odour the wormwood on the border of the field gives forth! I gazed on that bluish mass . . . and a very uneasy feeling crept over me. Oh, quick, quick! thought I; rumble, thunder, lighten, golden serpent! Pour out, stream forth, angry cloud! Only end this agonizing suspense!

Yet the cloud did not move. More and more it pressed down upon the mute earth. . . . It seemed only to gather itself more and more closely together, and to become blacker and blacker every moment.

There, suddenly was to be seen on its monotonous blue, something like a white cloth or a snowflake, which approached me with a steady, floating motion. It was a white dove flying over from the village.

She flew, flew faster and faster in a straight

course . . . and disappeared behind the wood.

Some minutes passed—and ever this terrible stillness. . . . But see! there gleam *two* snowflakes . . . up from the forest: in uniform flight soar *two* white doves returning home. . . .

And at length the storm breaks loose—the stillness has ceased.

I was barely able to reach home in time.—The wind howls and rages like a madman; red, low clouds torn as it were in shreds chase each other along; all is confusion, everything is in a whirl, a furious torrent of rain dashes down, the flashes of lightning blind one with their blue-green fire, the thunder crashes in sudden, short peals, like cannon-shots; there is an odour of sulphur.

But beneath the overhanging roof at the edge of a dormer-window sit side by side the

white doves—the one which brought its mate back, and the one which was brought home and perhaps saved from destruction.

The two ruffle up their plumage, and nestle close to each other—wing to wing. They feel so happy! And I too feel happy in looking at them . . . though I am all alone . . . alone . . . as ever.

May, 1879.

To-morrow! To-morrow!

HOW empty and flat and worthless we think almost every day when it is gone! How insignificant the traces that it leaves behind! How dull its hours as they vanished one by one!

And yet man wishes to live; he clings to life; upon that, upon himself, and upon the future he builds all his hopes! Oh, how much happiness he expects from the future!

But why should he imagine that the other—the coming days—will not resemble this day that has just passed?

But he does not imagine that. He loves not brooding,—and therein he does well.

“To-morrow, to-morrow!” is his comfort—

till this "to-morrow" sees him laid in the grave.

And once at rest in the grave, thou' broodest no more.

May, 1879.

Nature.

I DREAMT I was in a great subterranean hall with high, vaulted roof. It was quite filled with a uniform, subterranean light.

In the middle of the hall sat a majestic female figure, clad in a green robe, falling in many folds. Her head rested on her hand, and she seemed lost in deep thought.

I perceived immediately that this female figure was—Nature; and reverential awe penetrated my very heart like a sudden rush of cold.

I approached her, and bowing low I cried :
“O thou, our common Mother, on what dost thou meditate? Art thou pondering the future lot of mankind?—Or thinking how they

can attain the highest perfection,—how they can partake of the greatest happiness? ”

Slowly she directed her dark, menacing eyes upon me. Her lips moved,—and I heard a penetrating voice like the rumbling sound of iron :

“ I am thinking how to impart greater power to the foot-muscles of the flea, that it may more easily escape from its enemies. The equilibrium between attack and defence is disturbed. It must be restored.”

“ How ! ” faltered I, “ thinkest thou on *that* ? But are not we—human creatures—thy favoured children ? ”

She frowned.

“ All creatures are my children,” quoth she ; “ and I care for all alike,—and all are alike annihilated by me.”

“ But—Goodness . . . Reason . . . Righteousness,” faltered I again.

“ Those are words of men,” returned the

iron voice. "I know neither good nor evil.
. . . Your Reason is no law to me—and
• what is Righteousness?—I gave thee life; I
will take it from thee again and give it to
others: to worms or to men. . . 'tis a
matter of indifference which. And thou,
defend thyself till then, and—trouble me
not!"

I was going to make some reply . . .
when around me the earth began to rumble
and quake—and I awoke.

August, 1879.

“Hang him!”

IT was in the year 1803,” began an old acquaintance of mine,—“shortly before Austerlitz. The regiment in which I served as an officer was quartered somewhere in Moravia.

“Strict orders were given not to harass or plunder the population; but for all that, and though we were supposed to be allies, we were regarded with distrustful looks.

“My orderly had been a serf of my mother’s; his name was Yegor. He was an honest fellow, and wouldn’t hurt a fly. I had known him from childhood, and treated him as a friend.

“Well, one fine day there arose in the house where I lodged a terrific screaming and abusing of somebody: two hens had, it seemed, been stolen from my hostess, and

now she was charging my orderly with the theft. He defended himself as well as he could, and called me as a witness. . . . 'To think,' he said, 'that she could accuse *me*, Yegor Awtamonoff, of theft !' I tried to convince my hostess of Yegor's innocence, but she would listen to nothing I could say.

"At this moment came the loud sound of trampling horse-hoofs from the road ; it was the Commander-in-Chief passing with his staff.

"He rode at a walk : stout and heavy, there he sat on his horse, his head bowed and his epaulettes falling far down on his breast.

"My hostess caught sight of him, rushed towards him and threw herself on her knees before his horse, and wildly, with streaming hair and in shrieking tones, began loudly to charge my orderly, pointing to him constantly with her hand.

" 'General !' she cried, 'Your Excellency !

Convince yourself ! Help us ! save us ! This soldier has robbed me !'

"Yegor stood at the door of the house, in military attitude—cap in hand. Nay, he had even thrown forward his chest and placed his heels together just as if he stood sentry,—but said never a word ! Had he lost the power of speech, confronted as he was with the whole head-quarters staff halting on the road, or was he petrified at the prospect of the doom that was threatening him ? There stood my poor Yegor with a face ghastly pale,—and only winked with his eyes !

"The Commander-in-Chief cast on him an abstracted but ominous look and muttered angrily : ' Well ? ' But Yegor still stands there like a figure of stone, and shows his teeth ! Nay, if you looked at him from the side you would have thought he was laughing.

"Then the Commander-in-Chief spoke the two short words : '*Hang him !*'—put spurs to

his horse and rode on, first at a walking pace, then at a sharp trot. The entire staff followed him; only a young adjutant turned round in his saddle and cast a passing glance at Yegor.

"It was impossible to disregard the order given. . . . Yegor was immediately taken prisoner and marched off for execution.

"Then he completely lost his senses; only twice or thrice he cried out painfully in a stifled voice: 'O God! O God!' and then, half aloud: 'God knows it wasn't me!'

"Bitterly, bitterly he wept as he took leave of me. I was in despair.

"'Yegor, Yegor!' I cried, 'why, why, did you give no answer at all to the General?'

"'God knows it wasn't me,' answered the poor fellow, sobbing.

"The hostess was horrified! She had not expected this turn of affairs, and now she began to yell loudly. Wringing her hands, she begged all, one after another, for pity,

for mercy, assured us the hens had been found, and she would explain how the whole thing came about, &c., &c.

"Of course all this was not of the slightest use. For you see, sir, it was war-time, and Order—Discipline——! The hostess howled louder and louder.

"Yegor, the priest having by this time heard his confession and administered the last sacrament, turned round to me:

"'Please, sir, tell her not to take it so much to heart. . . . I have forgiven her.'"

And when my friend repeated these last words of his servant, he would murmur to himself: "Yegorushka (dear old Yegor), my poor innocent comrade!"—and the tears would run down his furrowed cheeks.

August, 1879.

What Shall I Think? . . .

I WONDER what I shall think when I come to die—in case I shall be in a condition to think of anything?

Shall I think to what bad account I have turned my life, how I have slept and dreamt it away, how unfitted I have been to enjoy its gifts?

“How? Surely this is not death? So soon! Impossible! Why, I have as yet accomplished nothing in life. . . . I am only now really beginning to think of accomplishing something!”

Shall I think on the past,—and linger in spirit with the few bright moments of my life—with the forms and persons that were dear to me?

Will my evil deeds intrude themselves on

my memory—and will my soul feel the burning pain of a too-late repentance?

Shall I think on that which awaits me beyond the grave? . . . Yes, and *does* anything await me there?

No! . . . I believe I shall try not to think at all, and shall occupy myself eagerly with some trifle or other, in order to divert my attention from the threatening darkness, the darkness—ever blacker and blacker—encompassing me.

I was present once when a dying man complained that they would not give him any nuts to eat! . . . and only in the depths of his sad eyes something trembled and quivered—something which reminded one of the shattered wings of a bird wounded to death.

August, 1879.

"How were the Roses so Fresh
and so Fair . . ."

I ONCE long, long ago, read somewhere
a poem. I soon forgot it . . . but
the first line has remained fast in my
memory:

*"How were the roses so fresh and so
fair. . . ."*

It is now winter; the frost has covered the
window-panes with a thick coating of rime;
in the dark room burns a single candle.
Here I sit cowering in a corner; but unceas-
ingly sound in my ear the words:

*"How were the roses so fresh and so
fair. . . ."*

I see myself standing at the low window of a Russian country-house. Slowly the summer evening departs and turns into night. The soft air breathes of mignonette and linden-blossoms. . . . At the window sits, her head leaning to one side and her arms resting on the window-sill, a young girl. Silently and steadfastly she looks up towards the sky, as if waiting for the appearance of the first stars. How full of noble enthusiasm are those thoughtful eyes, how touchingly innocent the parted, questioning lips, how regularly, how calmly breathes that youthful bosom not yet stirred by any deep feeling, how pure and tender are the lines of that youthful face! I do not venture to address her, but oh, how I love her, how my heart beats!

*“How were the roses so fresh and so
fair. . . .”*

And in the room it becomes darker and

darker. . . . The burnt-down candle flickers; fugitive shadows run hither and thither across the low ceiling; on the other side of the wall the frost cracks, and it is as though I heard melancholy old age muttering:

*"How were the roses so fresh and so
fair. . . ."*

Other pictures of the past rise before me. . . . I hear the sound of joyous country and family life. Two little fair heads nestling close together look at me saucily with bright eyes; the red cheeks tremble with suppressed laughter; the caressing hands are locked in each other; the young merry voices are heard together, and at a little distance, in the depths of the familiar room other hands, also young, with fingers that seem to become more and more confused, hasten over the keys of a little old piano, and the Lanner waltz is unable to

drown the humming of the patriarcha
Samovar.* . . .

*"How were the roses so fresh and so
 fair. . . ."*

The candle flares up and goes out. . . .
 Whose is that hoarse and hollow cough? At
 my feet, rolled up, lies my old dog, my sole
 companion. . . . He trembles and shakes.
 . . . I am very cold. . . . I feel so
 cold . . . and all are dead . . .
 dead. . . .

*"How were the roses so fresh and so
 fair. . . ."*

September, 1879.

On the Sea.

I WAS going in a small steamer from Hamburg to London. There were two passengers : myself and a little monkey, of the Uistiti kind, which a Hamburg merchant was sending as a present to an English business-friend.

It was chained to a seat on deck, and it kept turning round and round and chirping so dolefully—just like a bird.

Every time I passed by, it stretched out to me its black, cold paw and gazed at me with its almost human eyes so mournfully. . . . I took its paw and it ceased to whine and turn itself round.

It was a dead calm. The sea was like an immovable, leaden expanse. The circle of view was very narrow : a thick mist lay upon the water ; the same mist hid even the mast-

heads and wearied and dulled the eyesight with its smoke-like vapour. The sun hung like a dull-red spot in the fog; but towards evening it assumed a strangely mysterious, reddish splendour.

Long straight streaks, like the folds of a heavy silk garment, ran off one after the other from the prow of the vessel, broadened themselves out, curled themselves up and became smooth again, fell together and disappeared. The foam whirled high up under the monotonous stroke of the paddle-wheels; white as milk it split up, hissing, into snake-like rays, and then, in the same moment, blended and disappeared, swallowed up in the mist.

Uninterruptedly and quite as mournfully as the whining of the monkey sounded the little ship's-bell aft.

From time to time a seal rose to the surface—and immediately disappeared, with a sudden roll, under the scarcely-ruffled water.

The captain, a taciturn man with dark, sunburnt countenance, smoked his short pipe and spat angrily into the calm sea.

All my questions he answered in a broken growl; so that, do what I might, I was forced to turn to my sole fellow-traveller, the monkey.

I sat down beside him. He ceased his whining and again held out his paw.

Like a narcotic vapour the immovable fog lay upon us; and, lost in a dull, hardly conscious state of mind, we sat by one another like relatives.

Now I smile at it all; but *then* I had quite a different feeling.

We are all of us children of one mother,—and I was pleased that the poor animal quieted itself so trustingly, and nestled close to me—as to a relation.

November, 1879.

N. N.

GRACEFULLY and calmly thou goest through life, without tears and without smiles, not animated by even the most indifferent thought for others.

Thou art good and prudent . . . but everything is alien to thee — and thou requirest nothing of thy fellow-beings.

Thou art beautiful—and none can say thou settest store by thy beauty. . . . Thou art able neither to feel interest in others nor to desire their interest in thyself.

Thy glance is deep—but not thoughtful; in that clear depth there is—emptiness.

Thus in the Elysian fields move graceful shades to the sublime strains of Gluck-like melodies—without joy and without sorrow.

November, 1879.

Abide!

ABIDE! As I see thee now—so abide
‘ for ever in my memory!

From thy lips has escaped the last inspired sound; thine eyes do not glance and gleam: they veil themselves as though weighed down with the joy, with the blissful consciousness of that beauty which it was given to them to expound, of that beauty towards which thou seemest to stretch out thy triumphant, yet exhausted arms!

What light, tenderer and purer than the light of the sun, has been shed over thy whole form, over the smallest folds of thy robe?

What deity hath with his caressing breath fanned back thy waving tresses?

His kiss yet burns on thy marble-pale brow!

Here is the secret unveiled, the secret of poetry, of life, of love. Here, here is immortality! Other immortality there is none—nor need be. . . . At this moment thou art immortal.

It will pass away, this moment—and thou art again a little heap of ashes, a woman, a child. . . . But why should that trouble thee? . . . At this moment thou hast stood higher, hast stood above everything fleeting, everything transient. . . . This *thy* moment will endure for ever!

Abide! And let me have share in thy immortality; let the reflection fall on my soul—the reflection of thy immortal beauty!

November, 1879.

The Monk.

I KNEW a monk, a hermit, a saint. He lived only in the ecstasy of prayer—and, intoxicated by it, he stood so long on the cold flag-stones of the church that his limbs below the knee had grown quite stiff and had, as it were, turned into pillars of stone. He no longer felt them. And he stood—and prayed.

I understood him; perhaps I envied him. But he should understand me, and not condemn me—me to whom his joys are not accessible.

He^s has been fortunate enough to annihilate his detestable *self*; I on my part certainly do not omit to pray through love of self.

My *self* is to me perhaps more oppressive and repugnant than his is to him.

He has found a way to forget himself . . .
but I too find a way,—though it does not
work so steadily. . . .

He is no hypocrite—but neither am I.

November, 1879.

We are still at War!

WHAT a trifling circumstance can at times change the whole course of one's thought!

Lost in meditation I was once walking along a country road.

Anxious, troubled feelings oppressed me; deep dejection had taken possession of me. I raised my head. . . . Straight before me stretched the road away into the distance between two rows of poplars.

And on the road, ten paces in front of me, hopped in the bright summer sun, a whole family of sparrows one after another—bold, full of delight, full of self-confidence! One of those sparrows I noticed especially. He strutted so boldly along—out of line, with head thrown back and with boisterous chirps

—that he seemed to challenge the whole world! A veritable hero!

And meanwhile there hovered high up in the sky—a hawk which very probably was destined to devour just this same hero.

I saw how all this applied to me, roused myself, smiled—and in a moment the sad thoughts had disappeared. Courage, boldness, pleasure in life had again returned to my soul.

Yet, perhaps over *my* head a hawk hovers.

. . .

Yes, heaven help us—we are always at war!

November, 1879.

Prayer.

WHATEVER man prays for, he always prays for a miracle. Every prayer ends, in effect, thus: "Great God, grant, I pray, that twice two shall—*not* be four."

Only a prayer spoken face to face is a true prayer. To pray to the Spirit of the Universe, the Supreme Being, to the Kantian, the Hegelian, the incomprehensible, immaterial God, is impossible and unthinkable.

But can even the personal, living, palpable God cause twice two *not* to be four?

Every believer must answer: "Assuredly he can"—and he must try to convince himself that he can.

But what if his understanding revolts against such an absurdity?

Here Shakspeare comes to his aid: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

And when answer is given him in the name of truth, he needs only repeat the celebrated question: "*What is truth?*"

We will therefore drink and be merry and—say our prayers.

July, 1881,

SENILIA.

The Russian Language

IN the days when doubt, when anxious thoughts on the destiny of my country oppress me, thou alone art my steadfast support, thou great, mighty, true and Russian tongue! . . . Wert thou must despair in the face of all that is abroad home. . . . But it is impossible that a language should be conferred on any great people!

June, 1882.

THE END.

